

1918

# The State of Maine Agricultural and Industrial League: Why It Was Organized, What Its Purposes, How It Is Progressing

State of Maine Agricultural and Industrial League

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State of Maine Agricultural and Industrial League, "The State of Maine Agricultural and Industrial League: Why It Was Organized, What Its Purposes, How It Is Progressing" (1918). *Maine History Documents*. 125.  
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STATE OF MAINE  
COLLECTION

The  
State of Maine  
Agricultural and  
Industrial League



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1885

*Feed Maine Folks with Maine-Grown Food*

The  
State of Maine  
Agricultural  
and  
Industrial  
League

WHY IT WAS ORGANIZED  
WHAT ITS PURPOSES  
HOW IT IS PROGRESSING

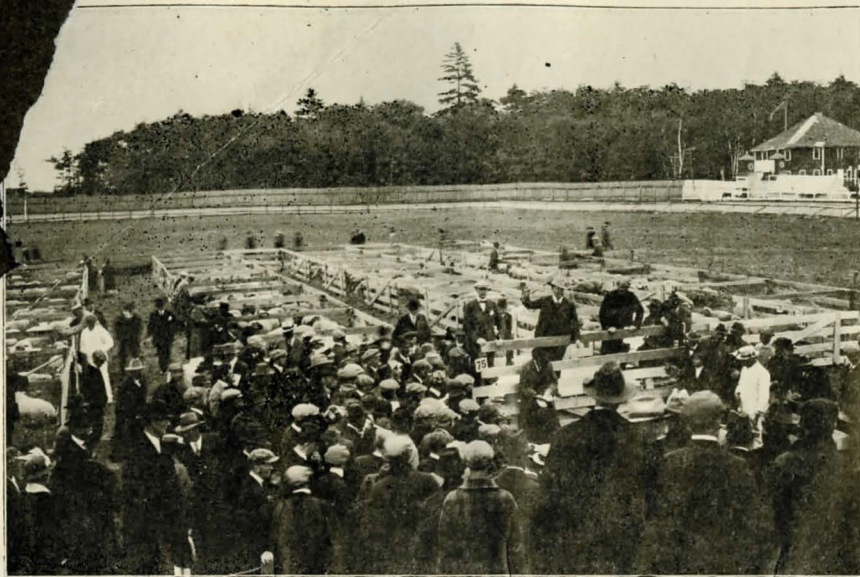


A field of endeavor in which  
every patriotic citizen of every period  
Maine can be of service

obtained 9.6% of the total  
England. The proportion in-  
1840 Maine's borders contained  
the people in New England. Then

720,428





First public sale of sheep in  
Maine. Conducted at Water-  
ville, September 12, 1918, by  
the State of Maine Agricul-  
tural & Industrial League.



## THE LEAGUE -- ITS MISSION AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

*"A state of wonderful, latent agricultural possibilities."*

This was the term applied to Maine by a well known New Englander who had returned home, this summer, after motoring from Kittery to the Canadian border. And he spoke the mind of every enthusiastic lover of Maine who sees here the great opportunities for a tremendously important work along constructive lines.

The old school geographies used to give Maine a place of honor among the foremost agricultural states. It ought to have a prominent place there now. With its 6,296,859 acres of farm land, an unsurpassed water supply, a climate especially favorable to crops of nearly every kind, a steady home market augmented every summer by the coming of a half-million tourists, and with shipping facilities that bring the state at all times within a few hours of the greatest markets of New England, Maine should be true to its "Dirigo" in agricultural, as well as other lines.

But instead of feeding half of New England, as she might well do, Maine has of late been falling far short of supplying her own rations. She has been actually consuming, in the aggregate, three times as much as she has raised. Not a creditable showing, especially in these war times, when to eat more than we produce means to shorten the subsistence of the allied armies that are fighting to preserve human liberty.

### THE LURE OF THE CITIES

This condition is due mainly to the fact that the industrial centers have lured many thousands away from the farming communities. Maine's present population of approximately 750,000 is only about eight times the number of people within the state a century ago. The increase of population in the United States within that period is more than 23 times.

In 1790 Maine contained 9.6% of the total population of New England. The proportion increased until in 1840 Maine's borders contained 22.5% of all the people in New England. Then



began a steady decline which continued until in 1910 Maine represented only 11.3% of the population of New England.

Twenty Maine cities contain an aggregate of 245,741, or about one-third of the state's entire population. Six agricultural counties, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo and Washington, showed by the last government census a decrease in population within the previous 10 years. Aroostook, Franklin, Somerset and Washington counties contain an average of less than 18 persons per square mile; Piscataquis, less than 6 persons per square mile. The most densely populated counties are Androscoggin and Cumberland, which average more than 90 persons per square mile, this average being attained because of the congested condition of the cities.

### DECREASE IN LIVESTOCK

There has been a tremendous falling off in the livestock of the state. Fifty years ago Maine had nearly 1,000,000 sheep. In 1880, there were 466,626; last year, 96,286 sheep and lambs, a loss of 81½%. The number of cattle owned within the state decreased from 323,569 in 1880 to 253,496 in 1916, nearly 22%. Thirty years ago the rivalry among towns furnishing teams of oxen at country fairs was an incentive to wonderful displays; today the passing of a yoke of oxen through a public street brings into action a battery of amateur photographers.

The entire output of hogs in Maine last year would have been sufficient to keep the swine departments of the Chicago packing houses busy but a single half-day. One of the largest meat packing plants in New England is located in Maine and a large percentage of the animals it purchases for slaughter other states than Maine supply. State representatives of the western packing houses say that not more than 1% of the beef, pork and lamb products they handle are raised in Maine.

### STAPLES FROM OTHER STATES.

Maine farmers have, as a rule, not made a practice of raising enough grain for their winter's needs. Even in the production of vegetables Maine has long been deficient, being content to purchase from other states staples that could be as easily and cheaply raised here.

Of the 138,925 bushels of dry beans handled by Portland wholesalers alone last year, not more than one-half of 1% were Maine grown. Yet the soil in Maine is especially well adapted to the production of beans. Few crops are more easily grown or more prolific in yield.

Practically no dry peas are marketed in Maine. Very few Maine onions ever find their way to the wholesale market. Of the turnips handled not more than 20%, and of the tomatoes only 25%, are Maine grown.

Maine produces an abundance of hay, but no attempt has been made to standardize it, and as a result most Maine hay brings second rate prices in the open market.

### A SOURCE OF HELP

To render assistance toward correcting these conditions is the aim of the STATE OF MAINE AGRICULTURAL & INDUSTRIAL LEAGUE, which came into existence in December, 1917, through the efforts of a group of public-spirited, patriotic, far-seeing Maine men, who believed that a close uniting of the agricultural and business interests of the state would result in bringing Maine back to her rightful place in the line of production. "Feed Maine with Maine-grown food," was the slogan they adopted, and the organization they founded is making itself felt in the application of that sound doctrine.

### POWER BEHIND THE LEAGUE

The League has the active support of the railroads, the banks, the Maine State Grange, the State Board of Trade, the Maine Cannery Association, the University of Maine, the Maine Department of Agriculture, the big manufacturing plants and prominent business men and agriculturists throughout the state. The co-operation of the individual farmers will eventually be solicited, but before taking that step the League desires to fully demonstrate what it is doing and can do to better the condition of the small farmer and point the way to greater and more profitable returns for his labors.

### HOW IT IS HELPING

One of the first moves made by the League to stimulate food production was to bring into Maine 2464 pigs, which it disposed of largely



to boys and girls, local banks financing the youthful purchasers and accepting their notes payable when the pigs reach the market stage.

To carry out this plan it was necessary for the League to go to Massachusetts. It was absolutely impossible to get together a carload of Maine pigs. Next spring when the League starts on its pig campaign with the boys and girls, Maine farmers will reap the benefit, for pig breeding centers are being established all over Maine, through the efforts of the League.

Every boy or girl who wishes to dispose of a pig this fall will be given an opportunity to do so, at fair prices, reliable Maine buyers having been provided with a list of names of the boys and girls to whom the League pigs were sold in the spring. The sows suitable for breeding will be sent to the breeding centers, and their progeny favored in the selection for the next spring drive.

The banks which co-operated with the League in the 1918 campaign with the Maine boys and girls in the matter of pork production were: Fidelity Trust Co. of Portland, First National Bank, Merrill Trust Co. and Eastern Trust & Banking Co. of Bangor, Saco and Biddeford Savings Institution, Sanford National Bank, Sanford Trust Co. and Springvale National Bank, Bath Trust Co., Ocean National Bank of Kennebunk, Westbrook Trust Co., Bridgton National Bank, Rockland Trust Co.

Under the auspices of the Bangor unit of the League an exhibition of war pigs was held in connection with the Eastern Maine fair. Thirty fine pigs, raised by boys and girls of Bangor and Brewer, were exhibited. These pigs, though only four months old, weighed from 100 to 135 pounds. They were a good demonstration of what proper care and feeding will do.

### INCREASING SHEEP PRODUCTION

In its encouragement of sheep production in Maine, the League is having the hearty co-operation of agricultural and business organizations, the University of Maine extension and the Maine Department of Agriculture.

The League secured financial backing for, and loaned the services of its executive staff in the aid of, a public sheep sale held in connection with the Central Maine fair at Waterville. The object of the sale was to give Maine farmers an

opportunity to get possession of some high-grade and pure blooded-stock. There was a large attendance at the sale and 344 sheep were disposed of, almost all of the 16 counties of the state being represented among the buyers.

Since then the League has been booking many orders for sheep in small lots, and either making the purchases for the parties applying, or putting them in touch with reliable sheep breeders.

Sheep breeding centers are being established, under the League's auspices, and there is every reason to believe that within the next five years Maine will be well back toward its former prestige as a sheep raising state.

Experts predict that prices of mutton and wool will continue high some years after the close of the war. There was never a time when the outlook for Maine sheep growers was better than the present.

### CERTIFIED SEED.

Through lack of organization Maine farmers have been able to get for choice seed potatoes not more than 10% above the market price of table stock. This slight advance was no incentive to them to specialize in seed potatoes. In other states the prevailing prices for certified seed were far above the regular market.

Early in the spring of 1918 the League started a plan to encourage seed potato production by securing a contract through the Eastern States Farmers' Exchange. Arrangements were made with growers at Presque Isle, in Aroostook county, and under the supervision of the Maine Department of Agriculture and the University of Maine, the growing of this seed was begun. Five hundred barrels of as fine seed potatoes as were ever sent out from any state were selected from the product of these farms and disposed of at a price fully commensurate with the labor involved in production. These potatoes are to be distributed among boys' and girls' agricultural clubs in Massachusetts, in which state there will be great need of certified seed next spring, because of the diseased condition of the local potato crop.

This is but the beginning of the League's work in the line of encouragement of certified seed production.



## SWEET CORN PRIZES

To stimulate the production of sweet corn the League offered \$600 in prizes to Maine boys for the best yields. The prizes were to be equally distributed among the corn-producing counties of the state, the rules governing the competition being similar to those in vogue in the University of Maine agricultural extension work, the county agents of that institution co-operating in the movement. The plan worked out very successfully and was a stimulus to youthful enterprise that will mean much, not only to the participants but to the Maine canners and to the whole state, for Maine corn has an unexcelled flavor that is recognized the country over.

## MARKETING, A VITAL QUESTION

One of the League's most important aims is to improve the marketing conditions in Maine. Wholesalers, commission merchants, retailers and producers throughout the state appreciate the existing need for more systematic methods of marketing the products of Maine farms. A representative of the League recently made a business call at one of the largest summer hotels along the Maine coast. In the stewards' department they were just uncrating a large invoice of vegetables that had been received by express from the Boston wholesale market. Several of the crates bore identifying marks showing that their contents had been raised in an adjoining town, at a farm within 15 minutes' motor drive of the hotel. Needless express charges had been paid on the shipment of these crates from Maine to Boston and back, and the quality of the vegetables had certainly not been enhanced by the long journey.

This is but a single illustration of the lack of system that has long prevailed throughout the greater part of Maine in the matter of marketing home products. In this instance the hotel management's explanation was that nearby farmers could not be depended on to furnish a steady supply of greenstuff, so it was necessary to contract with Boston provision houses.

The League is working out a plan to correct this condition. A thorough survey of the needs of every community, and the amount of produce that can be depended on to supply that community is being made, with a view to bringing together on a practical business basis the producer and the consumer. "Buy local-grown

food" is a motto that every hotel-keeper and every householder would be glad to subscribe to, when once the local supply and the local demand are evenly balanced.

## STANDARDIZATION OF MAINE PRODUCTS

The need of a proper standardization of Maine agricultural products is everywhere recognized. At one of the United States army cantonments in New England there are 14,000 horses. An endeavor was made to get Maine hay for them. The government rules require that only standard hay shall be purchased. Hay is one of Maine's great staple crops, but unfortunately, Maine farmers haven't, as a rule, followed the plan of separately housing and baling their varieties and grades of hay. Consequently, the quartermaster's department was unable to buy Maine hay, and the government order, which Maine ought to have been able to readily supply, went outside New England.

Maine's hardy climate and the nature of the soil are especially adapted to successful orcharding. In the flavor of its apples Maine has the much-advertised fruit of Oregon thoroughly outclassed, yet the highly standardized system of packing and marketing Oregon apples enables them to be sold, even on Maine fruit stands, at double the prices the un-standardized home product brings.

There is no reason why Maine hay, Maine apples and numerous other Maine products should not have a standing in the markets of New England equal, at least, to that of the products of other states. Standardization and practical business methods of marketing, such as the League advocates and is ready to assist in inaugurating, will achieve the desired result. As a beginning in this direction, the League has placed a contract for five carloads of Maine apples of a defined standard of quality.

## DEMONSTRATION FARMS.

Recognizing the advantage of having absolute supervision of tracts of farm lands for the purpose of carrying on demonstration work, the League plan contemplates the conduct of several demonstration farms in different sections of the state.



The first farm selected for this purpose is on the Cape Elizabeth shore. A Massachusetts business man, who is deeply interested in the progress of Maine as an agricultural state, has given the League full sway in the carrying on of his 1000-acre farm, one of the most productive in southwestern Maine. It will be under the constant supervision of the League's agricultural director, who has demonstrated his ability to cope with big problems. He is to have general charge of all the League demonstration farms throughout the state.

Not only will the Cape Elizabeth farm be conducted with a view to standardization in stock and crop production, but it will also be a training school for young men who wish to acquire a knowledge of up-to-date methods of farming. A limited number of boys who have shown an interest in, and an adaptability for, intensive farming will be given employment on this farm and fitted for places of responsibility in farm management.

### THE LABOR PROBLEM

Ever since the United States went into the war the scarcity of competent labor on the farms has been constantly increasing, until it has become one of the most vital problems in agriculture today. The League is co-operating with the United States Department of Labor in finding men and boys to supply the demand in various parts of the state. Calls for temporary, as well as permanent, relief in this line will receive prompt attention, and every possible effort made to assist.

### HELPING THE MANUFACTURER

Not alone to the aid of the agriculturist is the League devoting its energies. The interests of the farmer and the manufacturer and the merchant are so closely allied that what helps one is sure to indirectly benefit the others. Through systematic marketing the cost of food can be reduced, without lessening the profits of the producer. Lower food prices will help Maine manufacturers compete with the products of industrial plants in sections of the country that now have an advantage because of the cheaper cost of living.

Incidentally, the League is, in its co-operation with the United States Department of Labor, helping supply manufacturers and business establishments with needed employees.

The work of the League in the development of agriculture will materially aid the manufacturer to stabilize labor conditions in our industrial cities and towns.

### BRINGING BANKERS AND FARMERS INTO CLOSER RELATIONS

Many a Maine farmer could greatly increase his productiveness if, at a critical time, he could get a little financial assistance. Perhaps all he needs is a few hundred dollars to enable him to put across an undertaking that would net him profitable returns. The Federal farm loan helps wonderfully, but a farm loan from the Government is a long-term proposition, and what he needs is a loan that can be taken up within a few months, or when his crops mature.

His need is legitimate, his security ample, his credit sound, his purpose meritorious. A friend indeed is one who at such a time can investigate his case, report it to a bank and secure for him a line of credit to fit his needs. Here again the League fits in. The representative of the Agricultural College cannot, under the rules of such an institution, advise him in a matter of purchase or sale. But the League can. That is a part of its business. The League plan has the hearty endorsement of banks throughout the state, and they are ready to meet half way any proposition that means closer relations with the food producers of Maine.

### AFTER THE WAR

What is to happen in Maine after the close of this world conflict? Will those of our returning soldiers who before the war were engaged in manufacturing or mercantile business be content to return to their former occupations, or will many of them seek a life in the open? What can be done to induce them to permanently locate on Maine farms?

On every hand is heard the prediction that while jobs are now earnestly seeking men, conditions will be reversed very shortly after the close of the war and something will have to be done to provide work for the unemployed. What better opportunity could be offered than the privilege to take up for homestead purposes some of Maine's thousands of untilled acres?

This problem, of great importance both to the state and to its heroic sons who have freely



offered themselves in the service of their country, has been taken up by the League and is being discussed with representatives of the state and Federal governments in the hope of bringing about early and favorable action.

Letters have been received from the Governor, the members of the Maine delegation in Congress and from many representatives of industrial, commercial and agricultural organizations, expressing approval of the League's activity in this matter and pledging hearty co-operation therein.

The Department of the Interior is credited with interest in a plan to reclaim large tracts of swamps in the South, wastes of arid land in the West and even the sand dunes along the shores of the Columbia river, as a means of providing homesteads for returning soldiers. Why not have them come to Maine, where artificial irrigation is unknown, where Nature has done so much to favor the highest agricultural development?

Nowhere in the United States is there a more favorable opportunity to operate the colonization or community farming plans advocated by statesmen as an economic after-the-war measure. The time for Maine to act in preparation for such emergency is now, while the war is still in progress. The League can be depended upon to aid in every possible way this important movement.

### HOME DEPARTMENT.

The Home Department of the League began its activities August 1, 1918. The necessity for the co-operation of Maine women in the marketing of foodstuffs brought about the organization of this department. At no previous time in the world's history has the home been recognized as the actual warehouse of the world's food supply. This recognition of the importance of the home places upon women today the responsibility of knowing local food conditions and their effect on the world problem.

The regularity of its consumption necessitates more buying of food than of any other class of purchases which the housewife makes. Knowledge of market conditions must precede and prepare the way for judicious spending of that ninety per cent. of the income which is disbursed by women and for effectual substitution of locally grown products for those requiring long transportation. This knowledge can be

given through the organization of a woman's unit of the League in every large center in the state. These units are already in action, federating community effort along the lines of conservation through making a survey of farm products used in every city; through fostering the demand for Maine grown food; through establishing centers to care for surplus perishables from farms, local markets and war gardens, and through purchasing products packed in Maine.

The food survey will be used as a guide for standard crops in the production centers, thus linking the supply with the demand and ensuring an increased acreage on Maine farms. The Home Department is taking these first steps toward the solution of the closely allied food and income problem of both city and rural home.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

In the foregoing pages the aims and work of the Maine Agricultural & Industrial League have been briefly set forth. In this line of endeavor the League solicits your earnest co-operation.

The League's efforts are not a duplication of governmental, state, county or municipal activities toward winning the war, but supplementary thereto. It is a work in which individual effort counts. In selecting its executive staff, the League has aimed to procure the services of men and women with high ideals and with the energy, resourcefulness and purpose to carry those ideals into practical demonstration. But it is no more their work than it is yours. We are all equally interested in Maine's welfare, and especially in the movement to bring Maine back to its rightful place in the column of agricultural states.

The value of individual service was never greater, never more appreciated, than today. How can you best serve? The call is for volunteers. If you desire enrollment, or would like to make inquiry in any line of the League's activities, address

THE STATE OF MAINE AGRICULTURAL  
& INDUSTRIAL LEAGUE,

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State of Maine Agricultural  
& Industrial League deliver-  
ing pigs to Cumberland  
County boys and girls in  
Portland, May 11, 1918.



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